THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The Government of India has announced Export Import Policy for 1997-2002 which will be valid upto 31.03.2002, wherein a special provision has been made that Export Houses, Star Trading Houses etc. will be given Special Import Licence at 1% of the total turnover from the North Eastern States.

While there is no specific Export Policy for facilitating trade with Bangladesh in terms of development of North Eastern States, initiatives such as operation of additional routes for trade under the Inland Water Transit and Trade Protocol, issue of Chittagong Port as an additional Port of call, tariff concessions on 572 tariff lines at six digit level to Bangladesh etc. would have certain benefits for the Indo-Bangladesh trade.

(c) Recommendations of Shukla Committee includes:-

(i) A transport optimization study for international linkages and transit/transhipment arrangements with Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan.

(ii) Setting up of inter-Ministerial Task Force to review the entire North East border and inter-country trade issue with particular reference to Bangladesh, Myanmar, South East Asia and South East China and to report on trade opportunities related to manufacturing possibilities in the North East, required infrastructure and communication links, banking and warehousing facilities, necessary customs and security arrangements and manpower needs.

(iii) Review of Indo-Bangladesh trading possibility and transit routes in relation to North East.

(iv) Commission of a study (or a joint study with Bangladesh) of the costs and benefits to both countries from trade and transit, including the use of Chittagong Port as a entry pot for the North East.

(d) The various recommendations are under examination and it is premature for any time bound implementation plan.

Disinvestment Commission

*49. SHRI AJMEERA CHANDULAL:

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Industry is disowning Disinvestment Panel;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has urged the Finance Ministry to take this Advisory Body under its jurisdiction;

(c) if so, the main reasons therefor and to what extent the Finance Ministry has agreed;

(d) the total number of recommendations made by the Disinvestment Commission so far;

(e) the number of recommendations implemented so far;

(f) the total number of Public Sector Undertakings which have been recommended for disinvestment by the Disinvestment Commission; and

(g) the extent to which these Public Sector Undertakings have been allowed to disinvest?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no question of disowning the Disinvestment Commission. As a matter of administrative convenience, placing the Commission with the Finance Ministry had been suggested at one stage. However, the Ministry of Industry continues to remain the administrative Ministry for the Disinvestment Commission.

(d) to (f) 50 Public Sector Undertakings have been referred to the Commission. So far it has submitted three reports covering 15 of these Undertakings. It has recommended varying level of disinvestment/strategic sale/restructuring in 12 PSUs. It has also made some general recommendations on PSUs. The implementation of the recommendations is a continuous process subject to requisite Government decisions. Decisions have already been taken on the major recommendations relating to disinvestment which would assist in raising the targetted resources through disinvestment during the current fiscal year.

(g) No actual disinvestment has taken place so far this year.

[Translation]

Modernisation of Textile Mills and Jute Mills

*50. SHRIMATI PURNIMA VERMA:

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the amount provided for the modernisation of textile mills and jute mills under textile modernisation scheme and Jute Modernisation Fund during 1996 and 1997 (till date), mill-wise;

(b) whether the said mills are earning profit after modernisation and if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of workers retrenched as a result of modernisation of these mills, mill-wise;

(d) the number of textile/jute mills proposed to be modernised during 1997-98, State-wise; and

(e) the details of the amount likely to be provided for the purpose during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (e) The Textile Modernisation Fund Scheme was discontinued in August, 1991. As regards Jute Modernisation Fund Scheme, it has not been extended beyond 31.3.1995. However, a proposal is under formulation to facilitate modernisation, through technological upgradation, of the textiles and jute industry. The intended objective is to improve production and productivity of the Indian Textile industry to make it more competitive, including in the export market. Details of a Technology Upgradation Fund for textiles and jute industries are being worked out.

Export of Readymade Garments

*51. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV:

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the value of readymade garments exported during each of the last three years;

(b) the country-wise details of the export of garments made during the above period;

(c) whether the Apparel Export Promotion Council explored markets in various countries during the last year; and

(d) if so, the names of such countries and the value of garments exported to these countries?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) The total value of readymade garments exported during each of the last three years is as follows:-

	Value in million US Dollars
1994-95	4433.83
1995-96	4453.31
1996-97	4762.10

(b) The country-wise exports of readymade garments to some of the major importing countries are as follows:-

	Value in Million US Dollars		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
European Union	2042.4	1970.2	1899.9
USA	1257.9	1200.3	1352.8
C.I.S.	188.8	243.0	272.4
U.A.E.	132.9	144.8	186.4
Canada	135.7	160.4	164.5
Japan	149.3	153.2	119.9
Switzerland	106.1	110.5	101.5
Australia	57.3	71.2	90.2

(c) and (d) The Apparel Export Promotion Council has explored various markets by organising special export promotional events like Buyer-Seller-Meets as well as by sending exploratory delegations during the last year. The exports of garments during the last year to the countries where special export promotional activities have been organised by the Council have been as follows:-

	Value in Million US Dollars
	1996-97
Australia	90.2
New Zealand	21.9
Brazil	27.1
Venezuela	4.86
Chile	27.2
South Africa	32.5
Japan	119.9

[English]

Government Borrowings

*52. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question No. 422 dated November 22, 1996 on the above subject and state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken by the Government to invoke provisions of articles 292 and 293 of the Indian Constitution to enable the Parliament to cap Government borrowings;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No. Sir.

(b) and (c) It is proposed to circulate a 'Discussion Paper' on the subject for generating an informed debate. The feasibility and practicability of fixing a limit on borrowings by the Government of India under Article 292 of the Constitution could be considered based on the outcome of the debate.

Coins, Currency Notes and Security Papers

*53. SHRI BALAI CHANDRA RAY:

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of growing shortage of coins, currency notes of smaller denominations and security papers for sale-purchase deals and difficulties encountered by the general public on this account over the last one year;